

REMARKS

This application includes claims 1-53. Claims 11, 12, 25, 26, 38, 39, 51 and 52 have been canceled. Claims 1, 13-15, 17, 23, 27 28, 40-43, 49 and 53 are hereby amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 6, 7, 12, 13, 15-21, 26, 27, 33, 34, 39, 40, 42-47, 52 and 53 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims but were deemed to recite allowable subject matter. Applicant has therefore amended the claims as follows:

- Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 11 and 12, now canceled. Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Claim 15 has been amended to stand as an independent claim, incorporating the limitations of claims 1 and 11, from which claim 15 formerly depended.
- Claim 17 has been amended to stand as an independent claim, incorporating the limitations of claims 1 and 11, from which claim 17 formerly depended.
- Independent claim 23 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 25 and 26, now canceled. Claim 27 has been amended to depend from claim 23.
- Independent claim 28 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 38 and 39, now canceled. Claims 40 and 41 have been amended to depend from claim 28.
- Claim 42 has been amended to stand as an independent claim, incorporating the limitations of claims 28 and 38, from which claim 42 formerly depended.

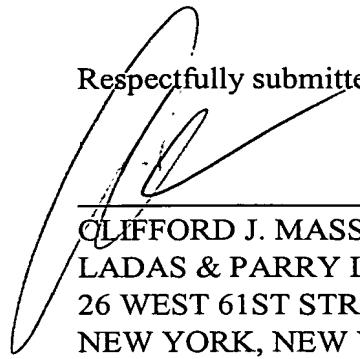
- Claim 43 has been amended to stand as an independent claim, incorporating the limitations of claims 28 and 38, from which claim 43 formerly depended.
- Independent claim 49 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 51 and 52, now canceled. Claim 53 has been amended to depend from claim 49.

Applicant believes the above amendments should be entered, notwithstanding the present final rejection, because they will put the claims in condition for allowance without necessitating further search or analysis by the Examiner. In view of these amendments, independent claims 1, 15, 17, 23, 28, 42, 43 and 49 are believed to be in condition for allowance. The remainder of the claims that were objected to depend from one of these allowable independent claims, and are therefore believed to be allowable, as well.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 23, 28, 29, 35, 36, 38 and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Blair (U.S. Patent 6,778,495), while claims 3-5, 10, 14, 22, 24, 25, 30-32, 37, 41, 48, 50 and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Blair in view of Olkin (U.S. Patent 6,310,892), May (U.S. Patent 5,835,536), or Gross et al. (U.S. Patent 6,266,348). Claims 11, 25, 38 and 51 have been canceled. While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 23, 28 and 49, as explained above, in order to expedite issuance of a patent on the subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Thus, independent claims 1, 23, 28 and 49 are believed to be in condition for allowance, as are dependent claims 2-5, 8-10, 14, 22-24, 28-32, 35-37, 41, 48 and 50, which depend from these independent claims.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,


CLIFFORD J. MASS
LADAS & PARRY LLP
26 WEST 61ST STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
REG. NO.30,086(212)708-1890